

## Air Force artists document aerial spray mission

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There is a long tradition in the military of recording for posterity the experiences of soldiers, sailors, Marines, and Airmen in peace and at war. Before there was the war correspondent and the camera, military artists provided the only source of illustration of battles and countries at war. Since the days of the Roman Empire, artists have traveled with armies, documenting battle scenes to tell the story of war to generations that followed.

American artists have documented every war since the Revolution when Archibald Willard painted “The Spirit of ‘76” and Emmanuel Leutze captured the heroism of a general and future president when he painted “Washington Crossing the Delaware.” Although a relative “newcomer,” the United States Air Force Art Program carries on this fine tradition of documenting the military way of life through the medium of art today.

The Air Force Art Program office at the Pentagon sent three of its artists to the 910th Airlift Wing in mid-April to document the aerial spray mission. The team traveled with the Aerial Spray Squadron to the Marines Corps Recruiting Training Depot at Parris Island, S.C., where the squadron aerially applies a pesticide to control biting sand fleas several times each year.

The artists initially had mixed opinions on trying to develop artwork based on a spray mission, but once they saw the C-130H Hercules from the 910th Airlift Wing flying at just 150 feet over their heads, they were inspired.

Mr. John Finger, one of the artists, was initially apprehensive about taking the job. It was only his second assignment and he didn’t know what to expect at first.

“To be honest, at first I wasn’t too excited about this project. But once I saw the skills, planning and teamwork that it took to do this, I was very interested. Then I watched them fly just over the trees. That’s a tough mission,” said Finger.

Even the seasoned veteran of the group, Mr. Anthony Stencel, was surprised at the mission.

“I admit that, after being all over the world doing Air Force art, I was a little hesitant about doing this. On paper it looked tough to get excited about. But this is a really important mission, because those recruits and instructors really suffer if the 910th doesn’t do their job,” said Stencel.

Ms. Joan Chiverton, the third artist, accepted this assignment as her first. She was happy to finally be a part of the art mission.

“I didn’t know what to expect, and there’s nothing like seeing these aircraft flying right over the trees. Not to mention the details in the planning. Seeing the aerial spray team on the job gave me plenty of inspiration to produce a nice work of art to honor them,” she said.

Each artist developed their ideas differently, and they kept their concepts a close secret. But, within the next few months, the world will see what visions the 910th inspired.

Artworks produced from officially sponsored trips are “donated” to the U.S. Air Force—usually as outright “gifts to the government” — accepted on behalf of a grateful nation and Air Force by the Secretary of the Air Force.

The Air Force will host a formal presentation of artwork in October at a ceremony to be held at Bolling AFB,



Artwork provided by Air Force Artist Joan Chiverton

**A watercolor image by Joan Chiverton of New York City, N.Y. shows Lt. Col. Frank Galati, co-pilot, and CMSgt. Dave Kane, flight engineer, during a spray mission at Parris Island, SC.**

Washington, D.C. to unveil and exhibit their works to be donated to the Air Force.



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**Lt. Col. Michael Seres, a navigator with the Aerial Spray Squadron, reviews an aerial spray mission setup at Parris Island, S.C. with Air Force Artists Anthony Stencel, John Finger, and Joan Chiverton.**